



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Accountability in Public Education

Of all the investments of state taxpayer dollars, none is more accountable for results than public education.

Our 1993 school reform law created, for the first time in our state's history, clear academic standards and tests that measure whether students meet them. Every parent and every community has access to school report cards that make test results for local schools public. Educators have used test results to guide improvements in teaching and learning.

Both state and federal laws holds schools accountable for continuous quality improvement.

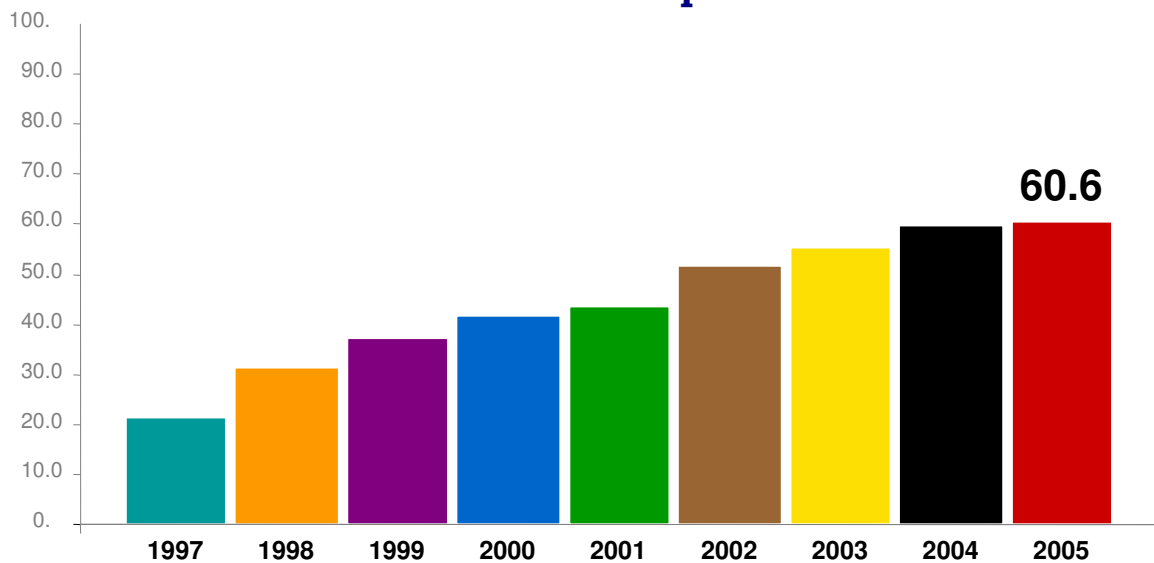
The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires an even greater degree of accountability than our state legislation. Every school must report how students score on tests given every year in grades three through eight and in high school. They must also show progress in improving the on-time graduation rate (thereby reducing the dropout rate), and in closing the gap between white middle class students and lower income and minority students.

Each year, schools are subjected to the rigorous examination of their data, and if they are not improving fast enough (in the language of the law, making "adequate yearly progress," or AYP), they are subject to a series of progressively more stringent sanctions, including eventual loss of federal funding for schools that persistently fail to meet quality improvement goals.

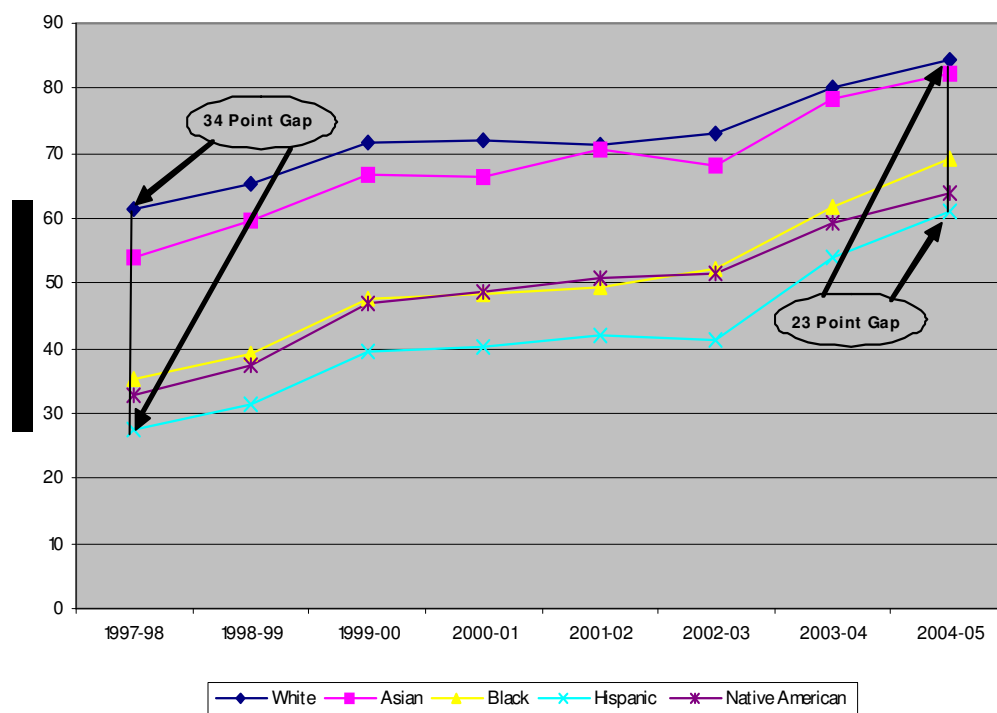
Effectiveness

In the past decade, Washington educators have doubled the percentage of students who meet our academic standards. This is a dramatic improvement in effectiveness.

The percent of students meeting standard in 4th Grade Math has almost tripled

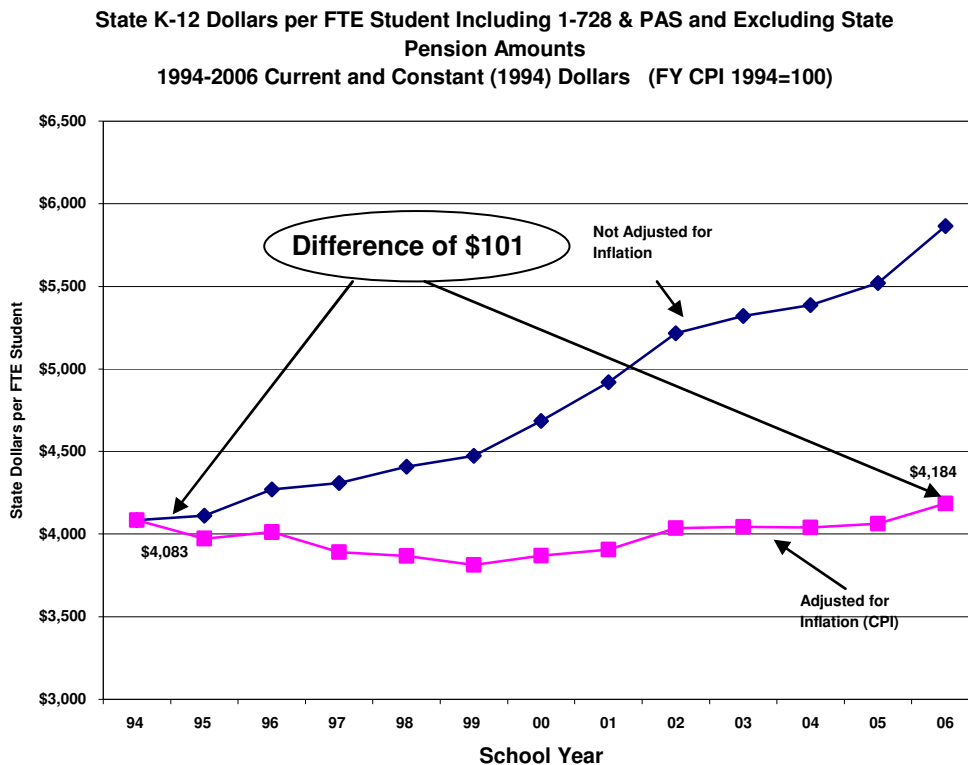


4th Grade Reading Scores Double for Most Subgroups and the Achievement Gap Narrows



Efficiency

Washington schools' productivity gains have been made with extremely modest improvements in school funding.



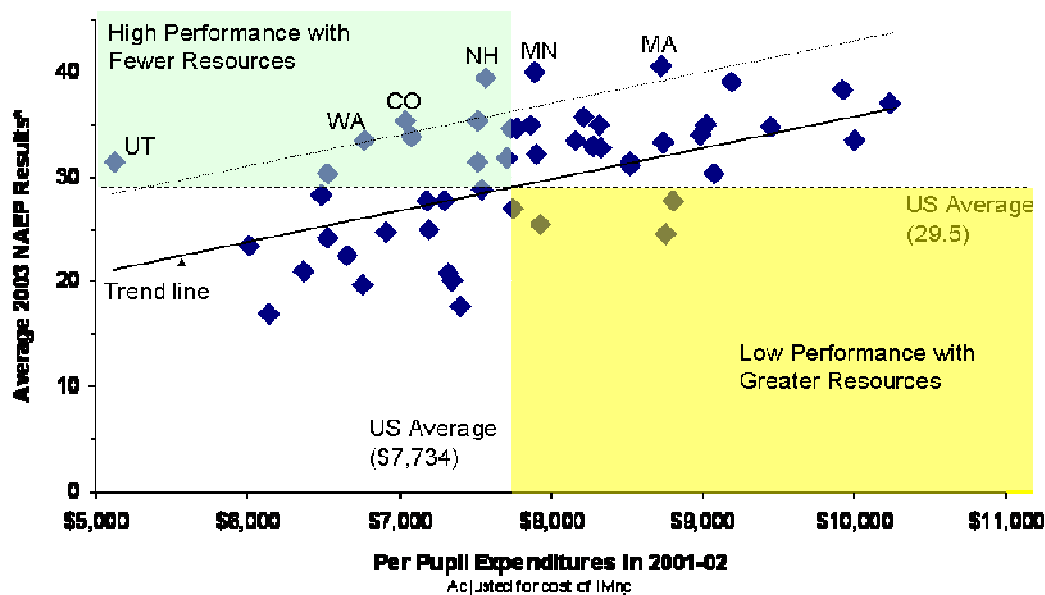
State academic standards have changed the dynamics of public schools and the job description of teachers.

Today, specific grade level expectations spell out what students ought to know and be able to do as they progress through each grade. Public accountability for achieving these goals has forced educators to work collaboratively, ending a century of curricular fragmentation and isolation behind the closed doors of individual classrooms.

Our accountable, standards-based system has required schools to focus on the learning needs of all students, to use objective data to drive learning improvements, and to focus professional development and other resources on clear learning goals.

As a result, even in advance of the 2008 graduation requirement, students are leaving our schools with higher levels of skill and knowledge than they were ten years ago, even though we have not provided substantial additional resources.

We have improved the return on investment of public education. Washington taxpayers get more value per dollar from public schools than most other states.



*Reading & Math Grades 4 & 8

Source: OSPI analysis of Quality Counts 2002

Rising scores on the WASL are in tandem with rising scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Many other states show rising scores on their own tests, but not on NAEP.

The road ahead is steeper.

There have been difficult trade-offs in current reform efforts. We have focused more resources on core skills of reading, writing and math at the expense of the arts and other electives. We have lowered class sizes in the primary grades at the expense of class sizes in secondary schools.

And we have more work to do to align curriculum with state standards, to retrain our teaching force, and to focus on helping struggling students earlier and more effectively.

The challenge ahead is to replicate the gains we have made in elementary reading in every subject, in every grade for students who are furthest behind. A system already stretched to the limit cannot achieve this goal without sufficient additional resources.

Now we need to reach higher. We need to make strategic investments to bring *all* students up to standard.

Now we need to join forces with early learning to prevent students from starting school without the skills they need to succeed. We need to invest in creating a

statewide menu of effective, aligned and inclusive curriculum. We need to ensure that our teachers have the skills they need to personalize instruction, to recognize differing cultural contexts and expectations, and to succeed in getting all students to standard in math and science. We need comprehensive student guidance systems such as Navigation 101 that engage students in planning their own futures. We need a compensation system that attracts and retains the best and brightest educators.

**Making the best use of time in the classroom:
efficiency + effectiveness = productivity.**

Our education dollars buy time in the classroom. To improve efficiency in K-12 schools, we need to continue to improve the quality of that time. We must become more intentional, more systemic, and even more results-focused.

No teacher or taxpayer or parent wants to spend even one dollar more than is necessary to create world class schools. But all of us know that more is needed – and needed urgently – to keep all students engaged in learning, and to raise the educational attainment of the next generation.

In a single decade, we have doubled student achievement. But we are still a very long way from the goal of preparing all students for success in the 21st century.

**Percent of Students Meeting Standards in Three Subjects
Reading, Mathematics and Writing (1999-2005)**

